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BIG CONTRIBUTION TO CURBING THE ARMS RACE

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THE problem of reducing the danger of a nuclear missile war occupied a special place in the Soviet-American summit talks in Moscow. It was accorded prime attention because what is at stake is the future of the present and future generations, the future of all humanity. Limitation of the build-up of the most destructive armaments which swallow up enormous material and intellectual resources was regarded as an effective contribution to strengthening world peace.

On the eve of and during the Moscow meeting people everywhere wondered whether the Soviet-American talks on checking the strategic arms race which had been conducted alternately in Helsinki and Vienna since the end of 1969 could succeed. They had been difficult talks for many reasons, not least of all because they dealt with delicate questions of military technology with a direct bearing on the security of the parties to the negotiations, on the most crucial modern weaponry.

The Soviet Union has consistently worked towards agreement on this issue. "We are engaged in negotiations with the U.S.A. on limitation of strateg-

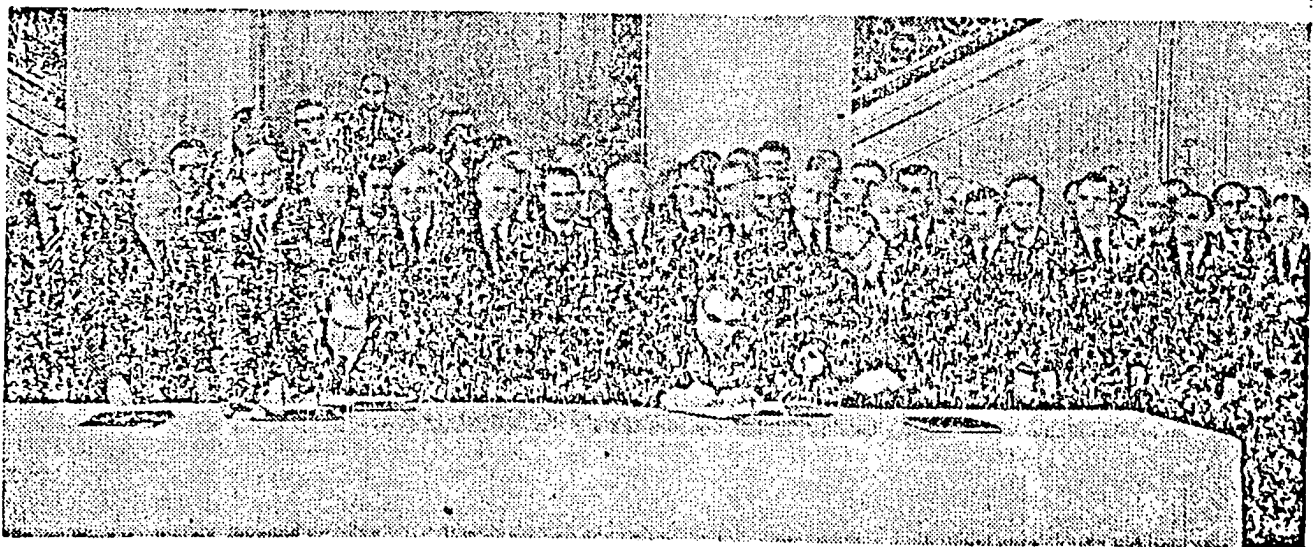
ic armaments," CPSU General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev said at the 24th Congress of the Party. "Their favourable outcome would make it possible to avoid another round in the missile arms race and to release considerable resources for constructive purposes. We want the negotiations to produce positive results."

The talks in Moscow cleared the way to agreement, and on May 26 Leonid Brezhnev and President Richard Nixon signed documents of vast importance—the Treaty on the limitation of anti-ballistic missile systems and the Interim Agreement on certain measures with respect to the limitation of strategic offensive arms. These agreements accord with the vital interests not only of the Soviet and American peoples, but of international security in general.

In order better to appreciate their significance, it is in place to take if only a cursory look at the trends manifested in the arms drive over the past decade. These years have seen one generation after another of land-based inter-continental ballistic missiles, submarines and bombers, each generation an improvement on and less vulnerable

than the previous. The creation of new offensive weapons brought in its train the evolution of means of combating them, and this in turn could not but give added impetus to modernization of the offensive means.

If the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems—and this to all intents and purposes has already begun—could not be stopped now, the immediate future would witness a chain reaction between offensive and defensive weapons, as was the case at one time between armour and artillery projectiles. What such a race could lead to is difficult to visualize. It is not by chance that many leading military experts and scientists have warned against the disastrous consequences of a race between "shield and sword." For instance, a study by the Federation of American Scientists, published in late 1970, noted that discontinuation of the deployment of ABM systems would remove the stimulus to the inclusion in national armouries of many offensive weapons and would break the "action-counteraction" cycle. This, the study said, would effect a big economy of means and would accord with the inter-



Signing of the Soviet-U.S. agreements in the Kremlin on May 26.

Photo by A. Pakhomov

CURRENT SCENE

ests of the United States. It should also be borne in mind that some estimates place the cost of all the components of the Safeguard system projected in the U.S. in the neighbourhood of \$50,000 million.

The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. have now undertaken sharply to limit the possibility of building up ABM systems. According to the Treaty, the parties are allowed to deploy no more than two ABM systems each—one around the national capital and the other for the defence of a deployment area containing ICBM silo launchers. Neither system should have more than one hundred interceptor missiles and as many launchers, and a corresponding number of radar stations. Both the Soviet and the American ABM systems are to be stationary and land-based. The Treaty prohibits the development, testing and deployment of ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based or mobile land-based.

The Treaty substantially limits modification and perfection of the fixed land-based ABM systems the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. are permitted to deploy. It also forbids the transfer of ABM systems to other states or their deployment outside the national territory of the signatories.

For the purpose of providing assurance of compliance with the provisions of the Treaty, each party will use the national technical means of verification at its disposal in a manner consistent with generally recognized principles of international law. Both the U.S.S.R. and the United States possess such national means. They also undertake not to interfere with these means and not to use deliberate concealment measures. To deal with questions relating to the observance of commitments, as well as other questions relating to the Treaty, a Standing Consultative Commission is to be established.

The ABM limitation Treaty is of unlimited duration.

The Interim Agreement signed at the same time as the Treaty is aimed at preventing increase in the numbers of offensive strategic missiles. To this end, the two sides undertake not to start construction of additional fixed land-based intercontinental ballistic missile launchers after July 1, 1972. The Interim Agreement also limits the number of submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers and modern ballistic missile submarines. The Agreement will remain in force for a period of

five years unless replaced earlier by an agreement on more complete measures limiting strategic offensive arms.

The Moscow agreements hold significant promise for slowing down the arms race and ultimately ending it completely, and this not only in the sphere of strategic arms. They reduce the danger of the outbreak of nuclear war, help to lessen international tension, strengthen trust between states, and should give a powerful impulse to the achievement of agreement on radical disarmament measures. For the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. undertake "to continue active negotiations for limitations of strategic offensive arms," and declare their intention "to achieve at the earliest possible date the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to take effective measures toward reductions in strategic arms, nuclear disarmament, and general and complete disarmament."

In fulfilment of the agreement, U.S. Secretary of Defence Laird has already issued orders to stop construction of a Safeguard ABM base in Montana and temporarily to halt work at other ABM bases. Laird also ordered suspension of work on all ABM projects prohibited by the Soviet-U.S. Treaty.

Of course the reaching of agreement is not yet disarmament. Nor can one expect so formidable a problem to be resolved overnight. But if the Treaty and Interim Agreement signed in Moscow are regarded in the light of both the immediate tasks and the long-term objective it will be seen that they might well prove to be epoch-making. Their significance consists not only in what they provide for but also in what they rule out. They may well become a turning point in the struggle to curb and eventually end the arms race.

Foreign press commentators have rightly pointed out that the agreement reached in Moscow is the first barrier to the swelling of nuclear arsenals since World War II. As the *New York Times* notes, years of deep-seated mutual suspicion and a great number of complex technical problems had to be overcome before President Nixon and CPSU General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev could affix their signatures to the documents. And the *London Times* observed that many nations, besides the Russians and the Americans, stand to gain from the agreements. It is justly noted that the agreements create a favourable climate for the final termination of the cold war.

The agreement to limit strategic arms is a victory for common sense, a victory for all those who are aware of the futility and danger of the arms race and who realize that in this race there can only be losers. At the same time, it is a defeat for the militarist forces who advocate unbridled build-up of armaments. Their spokesmen are already trying to scare the U.S. public by claiming that the Moscow agreements are likely to be damaging to the United States.

But the facts speak for themselves. The agreements signed in Moscow are based on recognition of the principle of equal security for both sides. President Nixon, too, made this plain in his May 28 television appearance in Moscow. The agreement on limiting strategic arms, he said, was not designed to give one side any advantage over the other. Judging by press reports, this view is shared by most U.S. Congressmen, Republicans and Democrats alike.

The strategic arms limitation agreement was welcomed by all peace-loving states and peoples. The governments of the socialist and many other countries, U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, and spokesmen of diverse sections of public opinion have hailed it as a major contribution to curbing the arms race.

The Soviet-American agreements carry forward what was begun with the conclusion of the partial nuclear weapons test ban and nuclear non-proliferation treaties and other important accords designed to check the arms race. They are a concrete manifestation of the desire of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. to carry out the commitments they undertook under Article VI of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, namely, to negotiate in the spirit of good will on effective measures to terminate the nuclear weapons race in the nearest future and on nuclear disarmament. This is a good example for all to follow.

The Soviet-American agreements are added testimony that ending the arms race and achieving disarmament are a realistic prospect in our time.